

Message Text

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FOR STOESSEL FROM CHARGE

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF US-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS

1. AN ASSESSMENT OF US-AUSTRIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS MUST BE VIEWED WITHIN CONTEXT OF AUSTRIA AS A NEUTRAL WHICH IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE TO USG PRESSURES AND IS EVER MORE CONVINCED OF ITS POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON COURSE OF EVENTS OUTSIDE ITS BORDERS. IN MOMENTS OF CRISIS AND CRUCIAL DECISION-MAKING, INITIATIVE WITHIN AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT CLEARLY RESTS WITH ACTION-ORIENTED, VERY CAPABLE CHANCELLOR BRUNO KREISKY.

2. IN STRICTLY BILATERAL SENSE, US-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS ARE EXCELLENT AND THERE ARE NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS AT MOMENT. AUSTRIA CONTINUES TO ENJOY POLITICAL STABILITY, AN EXPANDING ECONOMY AND RISING LIVING STANDARDS.

3. AUSTRIA IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ITS NEUTRAL STATUS, STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC POSITION IN EUROPE AND INTERNAL STABILITY TO PLAY AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. CHANCELLOR KREISKY, SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN 1970, HAS PURSUED A POLICY OF "ACTIVE NEUTRALITY" AND, IN DOING SO, HAS SOUGHT, IN LARGE PART SUCCESSFULLY, TO ENGAGE AUSTRIA -- BOTH AS AN AUSTRIAN AND AS AN INFLUENTIAL SOCIALIST -- IN A MORE DYNAMIC ROLE OF PROMOTING EAST-WEST DETENTE, AS INTERMEDIARY AND AS SITE FOR EAST-WEST NEGOTIATIONS.

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4. AUSTRIA, ALTHOUGH NEUTRAL MILITARILY, REMAINS STRONGLY PRO-WESTERN IN IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION, IS APPRECIATIVE OF PAST US ASSISTANCE, HAS IN PAST GENERALLY SUPPORTED US ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL ISSUES (CSCE, ROLE OF UN, ILLEGAL DRUG TRAFFIC, AIR SECURITY) AND IS OF SOME POLITICAL-STRATEGIC AND GROWING ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO UNITED STATES.

5. ALTHOUGH US AND AUSTRIAN FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES AS CONCERN AUSTRIA AND EUROPE EITHER COINCIDE OR PARALLEL ONE ANOTHER, THERE ARE SEVERAL POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS WHICH WARRANT EARLY, APPROPRIATE USG ATTENTION.

6. FIRST IS AUSTRIA'S FREE TRADE ZONE AGREEMENT WITH EC. OUR POSITION, WHICH WE HAVE CONVEYED TO THE AUSTRIANS MANY TIMES, HAS BEEN THAT WE CONSIDER AUSTRIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH EC TO BE SPECIAL CASE, SUI GENERIS, AND THAT WE WOULD EXPECT ANY AGREEMENT TO BE IN ACCORD WITH AUSTRIA'S GATT OBLIGATIONS AND TAKE FULLY INTO ACCOUNT US TRADE INTERESTS. IN RECENT GATT WORKING PARTIES ON EC-EFTA NEUTRAL AGREEMENTS, WE TOOK POSITION THAT THESE AGREEMENTS ARE NOT IN ACCORD WITH CERTAIN GATT ARTICLES. QUESTION NOW ARISES AS TO HOW WE WILL DEAL WITH AUSTRIAN-EC AGREEMENT IN FUTURE. RECOMMENDATION: THAT WE PROVIDE GOA WITH SOME EARLY INDICATIONS OF WHAT AUSTRIA MAY ANTICIPATE FROM USG IN THIS MATTER.

7. SECOND POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREA CONCERNS GROWING SENSITIVITY OVER WHAT GOA CONSIDERS LESS THAN ADEQUATE USG ATTENTION TO ROLE IT FORESEES FOR EUROPEAN NEUTRALS, PARTICULARLY AUSTRIA, IN EVOLVING US-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP. GOA FEELING OF ALLEGED USG NEGLECT OR INDIFFERENCE MOST EVIDENT REGARDING WHAT AUSTRIA VIEWS AS ITS LEGITIMATE SECURITY CONCERNS IN CONTEXT OF MBFR TALKS. SPECIFIC GOA UNCERTAINTY OVER USG INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS EUROPEAN NEUTRALS IS MORE EASILY UNDERSTOOD AGAINST BACKDROP OF MORE GENERAL WESTERN EUROPEAN CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE GRAND POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN US AND USSR WHICH AUSTRIA FEELS WOULD, NOT NECESSARILY, BE IN BEST INTERESTS OF SMALLER EUROPEAN STATES. RECOMMENDATION: THAT WE ARTICULATE OUR VIEWS REGARDING FUTURE ROLE OF EUROPE'S NEUTRALISM.

8. CONTINUOUS GROWTH OF GOA UNEASINESS COULD MOVE AUSTRIA TO ADOPT POSTURE MORE INDEPENDENT OF USG POSITION ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL/SECURITY ISSUES NOT INVOLVING VITAL AUSTRIAN INTERESTS. WE
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HAVE NOTED INCREASED SENSITIVITY OF GOA OFFICIALS IN GENERAL AND KREISKY IN PARTICULAR TO EMBASSY PRESSURE TO SUPPORT US POSITION IN UN SECURITY COUNCIL, ESPECIALLY ON THOSE ISSUES WHERE US ALLIES, E.G. UK AND FRANCE, HAVE TAKEN OPPOSING POSITION. SIMILAR GOA SENSITIVITY HAS BEEN REGISTERED REGARDING CLEARANCE OF USAF OVERFLIGHTS. RECOMMENDATION: THAT WE HOLD MORE FREQUENT HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH AUSTRIANS AND BE MORE FORTHCOMING ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE INVOLVING US POLICY TOWARD EUROPE, AND THAT KREISKY VISIT TO

UNITED STATES, POSTPONED IN 1973, BE RESCHEDULED FOR 1974.
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